**All about questions**

In action learning the questions are the key to learning. The questions should enable the presenter to explore and clarify issues, test ideas, refine plans, seek feedback, reflect on action and gain insight in a mutually supportive professional environment. Learning to ask the right question is fundamental. One experienced facilitator describes the right question as *a gift of insight* to the presenter. A good question can change the way we see situations and ourselves and can be a permanent eye-opener. In the initial stages the facilitator will model questioning technique and give members immediate feedback when necessary.

The best questions help colleagues to see situations in new ways. The aim is to support their learning. When questioning members should:

* + Ask open ended questions
  + Avoid leading, prompting or making suggestions
  + Avoid multi part questions
  + Avoid *Why* questions
  + Avoid making judgements
  + Use silence to allow thinking time
  + Listen without interruption until the presenter has finished answering

Members gain tremendously from being involved in the questioning. It allows them to see new ways of approaching issues and acting and helps them to reflect on their own practice. Some experienced practitioners find that they gain as much from observing the presenter as they do when it comes to their turn to present. Also questioning is a fundamental leadership skill and is the basis of all effective coaching, mentoring and professional conversations.